

# Buffalo stash of little value if it's worn

By Roger Boye

**H**ere are answers to more questions from Chicago Tribune readers.

**Q**—Years ago we stashed away several Indian-head nickels with a buffalo on the back sides. Is it true that some of those coins may be extremely rare because of a wounded buffalo? Also, many of our coins don't have dates. Are they worth saving?

H.J., Chicago Heights

**A**—Due to one defective die, the buffalo's right front leg is missing on several thousand nickels produced at the Denver Mint in 1937. "Good condition" specimens retail for about \$90 while an uncirculated coin might fetch \$500 or more.

Some dealers pay seven cents each for buffalo nickels with worn-away dates. Certain acids will "restore" the digits by dissolving small amounts of metal, but such coins have almost no market value because the acids leave dark smudges.

**Q**—I've received two Statue of Liberty coin sets from the government. Since part of the price I paid supports the statue repair project, can I write off the cost on my income tax return?

B.W., Chicago

**A**—Despite some reports to the contrary, the experts say no part of the purchase price is tax deductible.

**Q**—Please help settle an argument: Does the tails-side design on Roosevelt dimes have any special significance?

L.E., Decatur

**A**—Yes. The design depicts a lighted torch [symbolizing liberty] surrounded by an olive branch on the left [for peace] and an oak branch on the right [for strength and independence].

**Q**—I've received a 1973 nickel that was stamped off center. Does it have value to collectors?

R.M., Chicago

**A**—Probably. A Jefferson nickel that is just slightly off center might retail for as much as \$10, depending on the coin's condition.

**Q**—I own several \$1 bills signed by Joseph Barr, who was secretary of the Treasury for just a brief period. At one time a New York company bought such bills. What's their value today?

K.M., Chicago

**A**—Although Joseph Barr was in office for only 30 days at the end of Lyndon Johnson's administration, the government still managed to print about 450 million series 1963-B bills bearing his facsimile signature. Specimens showing wear from circulation have no special value on the hobby market; crisp, uncirculated bills might retail for \$2 or \$2.50 each.